REMARKS

This communication is in response to the Office Action mailed December 7, 2004.

Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 17 and 31 are amended to incorporate the feature that the rubber elastic body is bonded by vulcanization to an outer circumferential surface of the inner sleeve and an inner circumferential surface of the resin outer sleeve. Thus, as presently recited in the claims, the engaged stepped face is produced on an outer surface of the outer sleeve that is brought into engagement with the engaging stepped face formed on an inner surface of the mounting member. A basis for this amendment is found on paragraph [0033] of the specification, for example.

By contrast, as discussed in detail below, Tanaka discloses that the stepped faces is formed between the rubber elastic body and the outer sleeve.

Summary of the Invention

This summary is provided as background, and it is not intended to limit or otherwise affect the scope of the claims in any way.

The subject matter recited in the claims relates to a specific cylindrical vibration-damping device having a resin outer sleeve. The damping device has been developed in order to address an inherent problem in the device having a resin outer sleeve.

More specifically, a unique engagement structure is provided, disposed between the mounting member and the resin outer sleeve -- as recited in claims 1, 17 and 31. This unique engagement structure is established by utilizing an elastic deformation of the resin outer sleeve.

For example, see paragraphs [0008]-[0012] of Applicant's specification. There, the resin outer sleeve is a resin sleeve member bonded by vulcanization at an inner circumferential surface thereof to an outer circumferential surface of the rubber elastic body that is bonded to an outer circumferential surface of the inner sleeve.

The engaging stepped face formed on an inner surface of the mounting member assists in establishing the unique engagement structure for the cylindrical vibration-damping device of resin outer-sleeve type. Once the outer sleeve is press fit into the cylindrical bore of the mounting member, by means of elastic deformation of the outer sleeve, the one engaged stepped face is opposed to the engaging stepped face in an axial direction of the device, and brought into engagement with the engaging stepped face. Thus, there is exhibited a resistance to dislodging of the rubber bushing from the mounting member in at least one axial direction.

Obviousness Rejection

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 9, 11, 12, 16-24, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over JP-A-5-77637 in view of Tanaka et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection as applied to amended claims 1, 17, 31 and claims depending therefrom. The reasons for the traversal are discussed in detail below.

First, the primary reference -- JP-A-5-77637 -- fails to disclose the mounting member having an engaging stepped face formed on an inner surface of the mounting member 41. The Examiner recognizes this deficiency in JP-A-5-77637.

Furthermore, the secondary reference to Tanaka et al. fails to disclose a resin outer sleeve, as well as the mounting member having the engaging stepped on the inner surface thereof. In particular, as shown in FIG. 20 of Tanaka et al., the metal outer sleeve 210 and the metal mounting member 72 are fixedly assembled with each other by press-fitting between the metallic members. No step-portion-engagement is employed. In summary, Tanaka et al does not pertain to the cylindrical vibration damping device of resin outer sleeve type, and accordingly fails to teach the unique engagement structure of recited in Applicant's amended claims, to solve the problem inherent in this type of device.

The Examiner alleges that Tanaka et al. disclose the stepped shape used to bond the outer resin sleeve to an outer member 41 in FIGS. 33-36. However, the embodiments shown in FIGS. 33-36 neither disclose or suggest the unique engagement structure between the mounting member having the engaging stepped face formed on its inner surface and the resin outer sleeve provided with the engaged stepped face on its outer surface by means of its elastic deformation once press fit into the mounting member.

The outer sleeve 210 shown in FIGS. 33-36 is not resin but, rather, is metal that is bonded by vulcanization to the rubber elastic body 214. See column 14, lines 53-64. The outer sleeve 210 is secured by being just press fit into the mounting member as shown in FIG. 20, without utilizing the unique engagement structure as recited in claim 1.

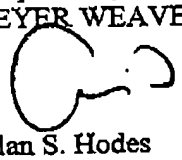
In addition, the stepped face provided on the outer sleeve 210 in FIGS. 33-36 never functions to engage with the mounting member, so that dislodging of the rubber bushing from the mounting member is resisted. This can be seen by observing that the stepped face on the outer sleeve 210 is oriented in the same direction as the flange. As shown in FIG. 15 of the present application, for example, in order to exhibit the resistance to dislodging of the rubber bushing from the mounting member, the engaged face formed on the outer sleeve faces an opposite axial direction from the flange.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that there is no suggestion to combine the cited references and, even if the cited references are combined, the combination does not yield the combination of elements recited in the claims, including the unique engagement structure discussed above at length.

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP



Alan S. Hodes
Reg. No. 38,185

P.O. Box 70250
Oakland, CA 94612-0250
(650) 961-8300